

SIRS,—Would you allow me to correct an error which I made in my notes on the Ground-Doves of the West Indies, published in the January number of the 'Ibis'?

Under the heading *Chamæpelia jamaicensis* (p. 111) I included birds from St. Thomas Island as referable to this form. . . .

This is certainly, as might have been expected, incorrect, and I have, in fact, since found that specimens from St. Thomas are identical with the Puerto-Rican form *C. portoricensis*, and have the same well-marked crimson base to the bill.

Under the heading of *C. bahamensis* (p. 112) I expressed some doubt as to whether the birds of this form were or were not "wholly and constantly black," as originally described by Mr. Maynard. I had the opportunity of shooting some of these birds in April last, and found that there is a distinct crimson cast at the base of the bill similar to specimens from Cuba (*C. axantha*), so that these birds undoubtedly belong to the crimson-billed race, and not to the black-billed form of the Bermudas (*C. bermudiana*). In describing *C. pallescens*, from Mexico, Mr. Ridgway states that the bill is "often (always in fully adult males?) red basally."

I obtained a series of *Chamæpelia* this winter in Mexico, and my experience is that in adult birds of both sexes the base of the bill is *invariably* red, or rather crimson.

Yours &c.,

The Hatch, Windsor,
June 19th, 1908.

PERCY R. LOWE.

Proposed Prohibition to Import the Plumage and Skins of Wild Birds.—All Ornithologists will rejoice to hear that Lord Avebury's Bill to prohibit the importation of the skins and plumage of Wild Birds was read a second time in the House of Lords on May the 19th, and referred to a Select Committee. There is probably little chance of the Bill becoming law this year, but it is a good piece of work to have got it

even so far on its way, and we are glad to see that it has met with approval from every side. The following is an extract from the explanatory memorandum prefixed to the Bill:—

“The object of this Act is to check the wanton and wholesale destruction of birds which is being carried on everywhere throughout the British Empire, and in all parts of the world, without regard to the agricultural, educational, and æsthetic value of birds. As a proof of the extent of the destruction that at present goes on, and which is threatening the extinction of some of the most beautiful species, it may be mentioned that at the plume-auctions held in London during the last six months of 1907 there were catalogued 19,742 skins of the Birds of Paradise, 1411 packages of the nesting plumes of the White Heron (representing the feathers of nearly 115,000 birds), besides immense numbers of the feathers and skins of almost every known species of ornamental-plunaged bird. At the June sale, held at the Commercial Sale Rooms, 1386 Crowned Pigeons’ heads were sold, while among miscellaneous bird-skins one firm of auctioneers alone catalogued over 20,000 Kingfishers. A deplorable feature of the recent sales is the offer of large numbers of Lyre-birds’ tails and of Albatross’ quills. The constant repetition of such figures as those given above—and these plume-sales take place at least every two months—shews that the Legislature must choose between the extermination or the protection of the birds in question.”

The operative clauses of the Bill are:—

“1. Any person who, after January first, one thousand nine hundred and nine, shall import or bring into the United Kingdom for the purpose of sale or exchange the plumage, skin, or body, or any part of the plumage, skin, or body, of any dead wild bird which is not included in the schedule of exemption to this Act, shall be guilty of an offence, and shall on summary conviction be liable to a penalty of not exceeding five pounds, and for every subsequent offence to a penalty of not exceeding twenty-five pounds, and in every case the Court shall order the forfeiture

and destruction of the articles in respect of which the offence has been committed.

“ Provided that this section shall not apply—

“(a) to anything done by virtue of a licence issued from time to time by the Board of Trade under such conditions and regulations as they may prescribe for the purpose of supplying specimens of any birds not included in the schedule to any particular natural history or other museum or for the purpose of definite scientific research; or

“(b) to the plumage, skin, or body, or to any parts thereof, of any bird not included in the schedule to this Act and forming part of the wearing apparel being *bona fide* the property of and either actually in the use of or accompanying any person entering the United Kingdom and not being for the purpose of sale or exchange. Every such person shall if so required make a written declaration to this effect.

“ 2. On the advice and with the consent of the Privy Council the name of any other foreign wild bird may at any time be added to or removed from the schedule to this Act by notice published in the ‘Gazette,’ and thereupon the provisions of this Act shall take effect as if such bird had been included in or removed from the schedule to this Act.

“ The following is the schedule referred to in the Bill :—

“ BIRDS EXEMPTED.

“ 1. Ostriches.

“ 2. Eider Ducks.

“ 3. Wild birds used as articles of diet.”

Mr. Douglas Carruthers.—Writing from his winter-quarters at Samarkand (see above, p. 388), on April 14th, Mr. Carruthers says that he was just starting on a five-months’ expedition into Eastern Bokhara, “ where there is a curious mixture of country on the borders of Afghanistan—dense jungle in the low valleys and some of the highest mountains in Central Asia.” He had collected some 500—